

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1-25 (canceled)

32 26. (currently amended) An intervertebral spacing implant system comprising:

a spacing member adapted for implanting between adjacent intervertebral bodies of a human spine, said spacing member comprising an external, concavo-convex contour with respect to one dimension of said spacing member, said spacing member further comprising a length between a first end and a second end, and a width, said length having a greater dimension than said width;

positioning means for enabling a surgeon to adjust a position of the spacing member when said spacing member resides between adjacent intervertebral bodies, said positioning means comprising a sheath member, a rod member slidably insertable into the sheath member, and a means for releasably attaching the rod member to the first end of the spacing member,

wherein said sheath member is confined to a size about the rod member sufficient to prevent the spacing member from entering the sheath member, and such that an end of the sheath member abuts the first end of the spacing member when the rod member is attached to the first end of the spacing member, to provide stability for positioning the spacing member.

27. (original) The intervertebral spacing implant system of claim 26, wherein the rod member has a longer length than the sheath member, such that a proximal portion of the rod member protrudes from the sheath member when said rod member resides within said sheath member and is attached to the spacing member.

28. (original) The intervertebral spacing implant system of claim 26, wherein the means for releasably attaching the rod member to the spacing member further comprises a threaded engagement.

29. (original) The intervertebral spacing implant system of claim 28, wherein the means for releasably attaching the rod member to the spacing member further comprises a female threaded recess formed in the spacing member, and wherein the rod member comprises a male threaded distal end having a size and configuration sufficient to permit threaded engagement between said male threaded distal end of the rod member and the female threaded recess formed in the spacing member.

30. (currently amended) An intervertebral spacing implant system comprising:

a spacing member adapted for implanting between adjacent intervertebral bodies of a human spine, said spacing member comprising an external, concavo-convex contour with respect to one

dimension of said spacing member, said spacing member further comprising a length between a first end and a second end, and a width, said length having a greater dimension than said width;

32 positioning means for enabling a surgeon to adjust a position of the spacing member when said spacing member resides between adjacent intervertebral bodies, said positioning means further comprising an attachment means for becoming releasably attached to the spacing member at a first area of attachment, and a stabilizing means for removably contacting the spacing member along a contact line that surrounds the first area of attachment.

31. (original) The intervertebral spacing implant system of claim 30, wherein the stabilizing means further comprises means for contacting the spacing member along a circular contact line that circumscribes the first area of attachment, said circular contact line being disposed in a substantially co-axial orientation with respect to the first area of attachment.

Claims 32-43 (canceled)

44. (currently amended) An intervertebral spacing implant system comprising:

a spacing member adapted for implanting between adjacent intervertebral bodies of a human spine, said spacing member

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comprising an external, non-porous, concavo-convex contour with respect to one dimension of said spacing member, said spacing member comprising a length between a first end and a second end, and a width, said length having a greater dimension than said width, said spacing member further comprising an upper surface having a plurality of spaced apart elongate recesses formed therein; and

positioning means for enabling a surgeon to adjust a position of the spacing member when said spacing member resides between adjacent intervertebral bodies, said positioning means comprising an elongate member, and a means for releasably attaching the elongate member to the first end of the spacing member.

45. (currently amended) The intervertebral spacing implant system of claim 44 wherein said ~~spacing member further comprises a first end and a second end, wherein said first end comprises complementary means for releasably attaching the elongate member to the spacing member.~~

46. (previously presented) The intervertebral spacing implant system of claim 45 wherein said complementary means for releasably attaching the elongate member to the spacing member comprises a recess in said spacing member.

47. (previously presented) The intervertebral spacing implant system of claim 46 wherein said complementary means for releasably attaching the elongate member to the spacing member comprises threads in said recess.

48. (previously presented) The intervertebral spacing implant system of claim 44, wherein said elongate member comprises a sheath member and a rod member slidably insertable into the sheath member.

49. (previously presented) The intervertebral spacing implant system of claim 48, wherein the rod member has a longer length than the sheath member, such that a proximal portion of the rod member protrudes from the sheath member when said rod member resides within said sheath member and is attached to the spacing member.

50. (previously presented) The intervertebral spacing implant system of claim 44, wherein the means for releasably attaching the elongate member to the spacing member further comprises a threaded engagement.

51. (previously presented) The intervertebral spacing implant system of claim 50, wherein the means for releasably attaching the elongate member to the spacing member further comprises a female threaded recess formed in the spacing member, and wherein the

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elongate member comprises a male threaded distal end having a size and configuration sufficient to permit threaded engagement between said male threaded distal end of the elongate member and the female threaded recess formed in the spacing member.

52. (previously presented) The intervertebral spacing implant system of claim 45 wherein said second end of said spacing member comprises a taper in a medial-lateral direction.

53. (previously presented) The intervertebral spacing implant system of claim 44 wherein said spacing member comprises a planar upper surface and a planar lower surface, said spacing member further comprising a solid configuration characterized by the absence of through holes between said planar upper surface and said planar lower surface.

54. (currently amended) An intervertebral spacing implant system comprising:

a spacing member adapted for implanting between adjacent intervertebral bodies of a human spine, said spacing member comprising an external, concavo-convex contour with respect to one dimension of said spacing member, said spacing member further

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comprising a length between a first end and a second end, and a width, said length having a greater dimension than said width, wherein said first end comprises attachment means for releasably attaching positioning means to said spacing member, and said second end comprises a taper such that a thickness of said second end is less than a thickness of said first end; and

positioning means for enabling a surgeon to adjust a position of the spacing member when said spacing member resides between adjacent intervertebral bodies.

55. (previously presented) The intervertebral spacing implant system of claim 54 wherein said spacing member is non-porous.

56. (previously presented) The intervertebral spacing implant system of claim 54 wherein said attachment means for releasably attaching positioning means to said spacing member comprises a recess in said spacing member.

57. (previously presented) The intervertebral spacing implant system of claim 56 wherein said attachment means for releasably attaching positioning means to said spacing member further comprises threads in said recess.

58. (previously presented) The intervertebral spacing implant system of claim 54, wherein said positioning means comprises a sheath member and a rod member slidably insertable into the sheath member.

59. (previously presented) The intervertebral spacing implant system of claim 58, wherein the rod member has a longer length than the sheath member, such that a proximal portion of the rod member protrudes from the sheath member when said rod member resides within said sheath member and is attached to the spacing member.

60. (previously presented) The intervertebral spacing implant system of claim 54, wherein the attachment means for releasably attaching positioning means to said spacing member further comprises a threaded engagement.

61. (previously presented) The intervertebral spacing implant system of claim 54, wherein the attachment means for releasably attaching positioning means to said spacing member further comprises a female threaded recess formed in the spacing member, and wherein the positioning means comprises a male threaded distal end having a size and configuration sufficient to permit threaded

engagement between said male threaded distal end of the elongate member and the female threaded recess formed in the spacing member.

62. (previously presented) The intervertebral spacing implant system of claim 54 wherein said spacing member comprises a planar upper surface and a planar lower surface, said spacing member further comprising a solid configuration characterized by the absence of through holes between said planar upper surface and said planar lower surface.

63. (new) The intervertebral spacing implant system of claim 26, wherein the sheath member is removable from the rod member when the rod member is attached to the spacing member.

64. (new) The intervertebral spacing implant system of claim 26, wherein said sheath member contactably circumscribes a point of attachment of the rod member with the spacing member.

65. (new) An intervertebral spacing implant system comprising:
a spacing member adapted for implanting between adjacent intervertebral bodies of a human spine, said spacing member having a cashew shape;

positioning means for enabling a surgeon to adjust a position of the spacing member when said spacing member resides between adjacent intervertebral bodies, said positioning means comprising a sheath member, a rod member slidably insertable into the sheath member, and a means for releasably attaching the rod member to the first end of the spacing member,

wherein said sheath member is confined to a size about the rod member sufficient to prevent the spacing member from entering the sheath member, and such that an end of the sheath member abuts the first end of the spacing member when the rod member is attached to the first end of the spacing member, to provide stability for positioning the spacing member.

66. (new) An intervertebral spacing implant system comprising:
a spacing member adapted for implanting between adjacent intervertebral bodies of a human spine, said spacing member comprising an external, concavo-convex contour with respect to one dimension of said spacing member, said spacing member further comprising a length between a first end and a second end, and a width, said length having a greater dimension than said width;

a sheath member, a rod member slidably insertable into the sheath member, and a threaded portion on the rod member for

releasably attaching the rod member to the first end of the spacing member for enabling a surgeon to adjust a position of the spacing member when said spacing member resides between adjacent intervertebral bodies,

wherein said sheath member is confined to a size about the rod member sufficient to prevent the spacing member from entering the sheath member, and such that an end of the sheath member abuts the first end of the spacing member when the rod member is attached to the first end of the spacing member, to provide stability for positioning the spacing member.

67. (new) An intervertebral spacing implant system comprising:
a spacing member adapted for implanting between adjacent intervertebral bodies of a human spine, said spacing member having a cashew shape;

positioning means for enabling a surgeon to adjust a position of the spacing member when said spacing member resides between adjacent intervertebral bodies, said positioning means further comprising an attachment means for becoming releasably attached to the spacing member at a first area of attachment, and a stabilizing means for removably contacting the spacing member along a contact line that surrounds the first area of attachment.

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68. (new) An intervertebral spacing implant system comprising:
a spacing member adapted for implanting between adjacent intervertebral bodies of a human spine, said spacing member comprising an external, non-porous, concavo-convex contour with respect to one dimension of said spacing member, said spacing member having a cashew shape, said spacing member further comprising an upper surface having a plurality of spaced apart elongate recesses formed therein; and

positioning means for enabling a surgeon to adjust a position of the spacing member when said spacing member resides between adjacent intervertebral bodies, said positioning means comprising an elongate member, and a means for releasably attaching the elongate member to the first end of the spacing member.

69. (new) An intervertebral spacing implant system comprising:
a spacing member adapted for implanting between adjacent intervertebral bodies of a human spine, said spacing member comprising an external, non-porous, concavo-convex contour with respect to one dimension of said spacing member, said spacing member comprising a length between a first end and a second end, and a width, said length having a greater dimension than said

width, said spacing member further comprising an upper surface having a plurality of spaced apart elongate recesses formed therein; and

B2 a sheath member, a rod member slidably insertable into the sheath member, and a threaded portion on the rod member for releasably attaching the rod member to the first end of the spacing member for enabling a surgeon to adjust a position of the spacing member when said spacing member resides between adjacent intervertebral bodies.

70. (new) An intervertebral spacing implant system comprising:

a spacing member adapted for implanting between adjacent intervertebral bodies of a human spine, said spacing member comprising an external, concavo-convex contour with respect to one dimension of said spacing member, said spacing member further comprising a length between a first end and a second end, and a width, said length having a greater dimension than said width, wherein said first end comprises attachment means for releasably attaching positioning means to said spacing member, and said second end comprises a taper, wherein said taper operates to reduce a thickness of said second end with respect to said first end without reducing a width of said second end; and

positioning means for enabling a surgeon to adjust a position of the spacing member when said spacing member resides between adjacent intervertebral bodies.

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71. (New) An intervertebral spacing implant system comprising:
a spacing member adapted for implanting between adjacent intervertebral bodies of a human spine, said spacing member comprising an external, concavo-convex contour with respect to one dimension of said spacing member, said spacing member further comprising a length between a first end and a second end, and a width, said length having a greater dimension than said width, wherein said first end comprises an opening for releasably attaching a rod member to said spacing member, and said second end comprises a taper such that a thickness of said second end is less than a thickness of said first end; and

a rod member for enabling a surgeon to adjust a position of the spacing member when said spacing member resides between adjacent intervertebral bodies.

72. (new) The intervertebral spacing implant system of claim 54, wherein said positioning means comprises a rod member.

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a spacing member adapted for implanting between adjacent
intervertebral bodies of a human spine, said spacing member
comprising an external, concavo-convex contour with respect to one
dimension of said spacing member, said spacing member further
comprising a length between a first end and a second end, and a
width, wherein said first end comprises an opening for releasably
attaching positioning means to said spacing member; and

positioning means for enabling a surgeon to adjust a position
of the spacing member when said spacing member resides between
adjacent intervertebral bodies, said positioning means comprising
a sheath member, a rod member slidably insertable into the sheath
member, and a means for releasably attaching the rod member to the
opening in the first end of the spacing member,

wherein said sheath member is confined to a size about the rod
member sufficient to prevent the spacing member from entering the
sheath member, and such that an end of the sheath member abuts the
first end of the spacing member when the rod member is attached to
the first end of the spacing member, to provide stability for
positioning the spacing member;

wherein said sheath member is movable with respect to said rod in a direction away from said spacing member when said rod is attached to said spacing member; and

32 wherein said sheath member contacts said spacing member in a non-interference fit such that said sheath member can rotate with respect to said spacing member.

74. (new) The intervertebral spacing implant system of claim 73, wherein the means for releasably attaching the rod member to the opening in the first end of the spacing member comprises threads on the end of the rod.

75. (new) The intervertebral spacing implant system of claim 73, wherein the sheath member is removable from the rod member when the rod member is attached to the spacing member.

76. (new) The intervertebral spacing implant system of claim 73, wherein the sheath member has a uniform cross section along a length of said sheath member.

77. (new) The intervertebral spacing implant system of claim 73, wherein the rod member has a uniform cross section along a length of said rod member.

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78. (New) An intervertebral spacing implant comprising:

a spacing member adapted for implanting between adjacent vertebral bodies of a human spine as a load-bearing replacement for a spinal disc, said spacing member further comprising an external, concavo-convex contour with respect to one dimension of said spacing member;

wherein the spacing member is solid and is either inherently non-porous or is otherwise rendered non-porous, and is constructed from a rigid, non-resilient load-bearing material;

wherein the spacing member defines an imaginary arcuate centerline residing between opposing sides of the external concavo-convex contour of said spacing member, said arcuate centerline forming less than half a circle such that said spacing member has a cashew shape having a uniform width along a majority length of the spacing member;

wherein the spacing member comprises an upper surface and a lower surface and a free insertion end, and wherein said spacing member includes a tapered portion such that said spacing member

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becomes progressively thinner toward said free insertion end of said spacing member, wherein said tapered portion is characterized by at least one smooth surface that is a part of either said upper surface or said lower surface, said smooth surface having an absence of corners, points or other abrupt edges; and

positioning means for enabling a surgeon to adjust a position of the spacing member when said spacing member resides between adjacent intervertebral bodies.

79. (New) An intervertebral spacing implant comprising:

a spacing member adapted for implanting between adjacent vertebral bodies of a human spine as a load-bearing replacement for a spinal disc, said spacing member further comprising an external, concavo-convex contour with respect to one dimension of said spacing member;

wherein the spacing member is solid and is either inherently non-porous or is otherwise rendered non-porous, and is constructed from a rigid, non-resilient load-bearing material;

wherein the spacing member defines an imaginary arcuate centerline residing between opposing sides of the external concavo-convex contour of said spacing member, said arcuate centerline forming less than half a circle such that said spacing member has

a cashew shape having a uniform width along a majority length of the spacing member; and

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wherein the spacing member comprises an upper surface and a lower surface and a free insertion end, and wherein said spacing member includes a tapered portion such that said spacing member becomes progressively thinner toward said free insertion end of said spacing member, wherein said tapered portion is characterized by at least one smooth surface that is a part of either said upper surface or said lower surface, said smooth surface having an absence of corners, points or other abrupt edges; and

a rod member for enabling a surgeon to adjust a position of the spacing member when said spacing member resides between adjacent intervertebral bodies.

80. (New) An intervertebral spacing implant comprising:

a spacing member adapted for implanting between adjacent vertebral bodies of a human spine as a load-bearing replacement for a spinal disc, said spacing member further comprising an external, concavo-convex contour with respect to one dimension of said spacing member;

wherein the spacing member is solid and is constructed from a rigid, non-resilient load-bearing material;

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wherein the spacing member defines an imaginary arcuate centerline residing between opposing sides of the external concavo-convex contour of said spacing member, said arcuate centerline forming less than half a circle such that said spacing member has a cashew shape having a uniform width along a majority length of the spacing member;

wherein the spacing member comprises an upper surface and a lower surface and a free insertion end, and wherein at least one of said upper surface and said lower surface comprises a male corner line, and wherein said spacing member includes a tapered portion between said male corner line and said free insertion end of said spacing member such that said spacing member becomes progressively thinner from said male corner line toward said free insertion end of said spacing member, wherein said tapered portion is characterized by at least one smooth surface that is a part of either said upper surface or said lower surface and extends from said male corner line to said free insertion end, said smooth surface having an absence of corners, points or other abrupt edges, and

positioning means for enabling a surgeon to adjust a position of the spacing member when said spacing member resides between adjacent intervertebral bodies.

81. (New) An intervertebral spacing implant comprising:

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a spacing member adapted for implanting between adjacent vertebral bodies of a human spine as a load-bearing replacement for a spinal disc, said spacing member further comprising an external, concavo-convex contour with respect to one dimension of said spacing member;

wherein the spacing member is solid and is constructed from a rigid, non-resilient load-bearing material;

wherein the spacing member defines an imaginary arcuate centerline residing between opposing sides of the external concavo-convex contour of said spacing member, said arcuate centerline forming less than half a circle such that said spacing member has a cashew shape having a uniform width along a majority length of the spacing member;

wherein the spacing member comprises an upper surface and a lower surface and a free insertion end, and wherein at least one of said upper surface and said lower surface comprises a male corner line, and wherein said spacing member includes a tapered portion between said male corner line and said free insertion end of said spacing member such that said spacing member becomes progressively thinner from said male corner line toward said free insertion end

of said spacing member, wherein said tapered portion is characterized by at least one smooth surface that is a part of either said upper surface or said lower surface and extends from said male corner line to said free insertion end, said smooth surface having an absence of corners, points or other abrupt edges, and

B2 a rod member for enabling a surgeon to adjust a position of the spacing member when said spacing member resides between adjacent intervertebral bodies.

82. (New) An intervertebral spacing implant comprising:

a spacing member adapted for implanting between adjacent vertebral bodies of a human spine as a load-bearing replacement for a spinal disc, said spacing member further comprising an external, concavo-convex contour with respect to one dimension of said spacing member;

wherein the spacing member is either inherently non-porous or is otherwise rendered non-porous, and is constructed from a rigid, non-resilient load-bearing material;

wherein the spacing member defines an imaginary arcuate centerline residing between opposing sides of the external concavo-convex contour of said spacing member, said arcuate centerline

forming less than half a circle such that said spacing member has a cashew shape having a uniform width along a majority length of the spacing member;

B2 wherein the spacing member comprises an upper surface and a lower surface and a free insertion end, and wherein at least one of said upper surface and said lower surface comprises a male corner line, and wherein said spacing member includes a tapered portion between said male corner line and said free insertion end of said spacing member such that said spacing member becomes progressively thinner from said male corner line toward said free insertion end of said spacing member, wherein said tapered portion is characterized by at least one smooth surface that is a part of either said upper surface or said lower surface and extends from said male corner line to said free insertion end, said smooth surface having an absence of corners, points or other abrupt edges; and

positioning means for enabling a surgeon to adjust a position of the spacing member when said spacing member resides between adjacent intervertebral bodies.

83. (New) An intervertebral spacing implant comprising:

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a spacing member adapted for implanting between adjacent vertebral bodies of a human spine as a load-bearing replacement for a spinal disc, said spacing member further comprising an external, concavo-convex contour with respect to one dimension of said spacing member;

wherein the spacing member is either inherently non-porous or is otherwise rendered non-porous, and is constructed from a rigid, non-resilient load-bearing material;

wherein the spacing member defines an imaginary arcuate centerline residing between opposing sides of the external concavo-convex contour of said spacing member, said arcuate centerline forming less than half a circle such that said spacing member has a cashew shape having a uniform width along a majority length of the spacing member;

wherein the spacing member comprises an upper surface and a lower surface and a free insertion end, and wherein at least one of said upper surface and said lower surface comprises a male corner line, and wherein said spacing member includes a tapered portion between said male corner line and said free insertion end of said spacing member such that said spacing member becomes progressively thinner from said male corner line toward said free insertion end of said spacing member, wherein said tapered portion is

characterized by at least one smooth surface that is a part of either said upper surface or said lower surface and extends from said male corner line to said free insertion end, said smooth surface having an absence of corners, points or other abrupt edges; and

B2 a rod member for enabling a surgeon to adjust a position of the spacing member when said spacing member resides between adjacent intervertebral bodies.

84. (New) An intervertebral spacing implant comprising:

a spacing member adapted for implanting between adjacent vertebral bodies of a human spine as a load-bearing replacement for a spinal disc, said spacing member further comprising an external, concavo-convex contour with respect to one dimension of said spacing member;

wherein the spacing member is solid and is either inherently non-porous or is otherwise rendered non-porous, and is constructed from a rigid, non-resilient load-bearing material;

wherein the spacing member defines an imaginary arcuate centerline residing between opposing sides of the external concavo-convex contour of said spacing member, said arcuate centerline

forming less than half a circle such that said spacing member has a uniform width along a majority length of the spacing member;

B2 wherein the spacing member comprises an upper surface and a lower surface and a free insertion end, and wherein at least one of said upper surface and said lower surface comprises a male corner line, and wherein said spacing member includes a tapered portion between said male corner line and said free insertion end of said spacing member such that said spacing member becomes progressively thinner from said male corner line toward said free insertion end of said spacing member, wherein said tapered portion is characterized by at least one smooth surface that is a part of either said upper surface or said lower surface and extends from said male corner line to said free insertion end, said smooth surface having an absence of corners, points or other abrupt edges; and

positioning means for enabling a surgeon to adjust a position of the spacing member when said spacing member resides between adjacent intervertebral bodies.

85. (New) An intervertebral spacing implant comprising:

a spacing member adapted for implanting between adjacent vertebral bodies of a human spine as a load-bearing replacement for

a spinal disc, said spacing member further comprising an external, concavo-convex contour with respect to one dimension of said spacing member;

B2 wherein the spacing member is solid and is either inherently non-porous or is otherwise rendered non-porous, and is constructed from a rigid, non-resilient load-bearing material;

wherein the spacing member defines an imaginary arcuate centerline residing between opposing sides of the external concavo-convex contour of said spacing member, said arcuate centerline forming less than half a circle such that said spacing member has a uniform width along a majority length of the spacing member;

wherein the spacing member comprises an upper surface and a lower surface and a free insertion end, and wherein at least one of said upper surface and said lower surface comprises a male corner line, and wherein said spacing member includes a tapered portion between said male corner line and said free insertion end of said spacing member such that said spacing member becomes progressively thinner from said male corner line toward said free insertion end of said spacing member, wherein said tapered portion is characterized by at least one smooth surface that is a part of either said upper surface or said lower surface and extends from said male corner line to said free insertion end, said smooth

surface having an absence of corners, points or other abrupt edges;
and

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a rod member for enabling a surgeon to adjust a position of
the spacing member when said spacing member resides between
adjacent intervertebral bodies.

86. (New) An intervertebral spacing implant comprising:

a spacing member adapted for implanting between adjacent
vertebral bodies of a human spine as a load-bearing replacement for
a spinal disc, said spacing member further comprising an external,
concavo-convex contour with respect to one dimension of said
spacing member;

wherein the spacing member is solid and is either inherently
non-porous or is otherwise rendered non-porous, and is constructed
from a rigid, non-resilient load-bearing material;

wherein the spacing has a cashew shape;

wherein the spacing member comprises an upper surface and a
lower surface and a free insertion end, and wherein at least one of
said upper surface and said lower surface comprises a male corner
line, and wherein said spacing member includes a tapered portion
between said male corner line and said free insertion end of said
spacing member such that said spacing member becomes progressively

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thinner from said male corner line toward said free insertion end of said spacing member, wherein said tapered portion is characterized by at least one smooth surface that is a part of either said upper surface or said lower surface and extends from said male corner line to said free insertion end, said smooth surface having an absence of corners, points or other abrupt edges; and

positioning means for enabling a surgeon to adjust a position of the spacing member when said spacing member resides between adjacent intervertebral bodies.

87. (New) An intervertebral spacing implant comprising:

a spacing member adapted for implanting between adjacent vertebral bodies of a human spine as a load-bearing replacement for a spinal disc, said spacing member further comprising an external, concavo-convex contour with respect to one dimension of said spacing member;

wherein the spacing member is solid and is either inherently non-porous or is otherwise rendered non-porous, and is constructed from a rigid, non-resilient load-bearing material;

wherein the spacing member has a cashew shape;

32 wherein the spacing member comprises an upper surface and a lower surface and a free insertion end, and wherein at least one of said upper surface and said lower surface comprises a male corner line, and wherein said spacing member includes a tapered portion between said male corner line and said free insertion end of said spacing member such that said spacing member becomes progressively thinner from said male corner line toward said free insertion end of said spacing member, wherein said tapered portion is characterized by at least one smooth surface that is a part of either said upper surface or said lower surface and extends from said male corner line to said free insertion end, said smooth surface having an absence of corners, points or other abrupt edges; and

a rod member for enabling a surgeon to adjust a position of the spacing member when said spacing member resides between adjacent intervertebral bodies.

88. (New) An intervertebral spacing implant comprising:

a spacing member adapted for implanting between adjacent vertebral bodies of a human spine as a load-bearing replacement for a spinal disc, said spacing member further comprising an external,

concavo-convex contour with respect to one dimension of said spacing member;

wherein the spacing member is solid and is either inherently non-porous or is otherwise rendered non-porous;

BB wherein the spacing member defines an imaginary arcuate centerline residing between opposing sides of the external concavo-convex contour of said spacing member, said arcuate centerline forming less than half a circle such that said spacing member has a cashew shape having a uniform width along a majority length of the spacing member;

wherein the spacing member comprises an upper surface and a lower surface and a free insertion end, and wherein at least one of said upper surface and said lower surface comprises a male corner line, and wherein said spacing member includes a tapered portion between said male corner line and said free insertion end of said spacing member such that said spacing member becomes progressively thinner from said male corner line toward said free insertion end of said spacing member, wherein said tapered portion is characterized by at least one smooth surface that is a part of either said upper surface or said lower surface and extends from said male corner line to said free insertion end, said smooth

surface having an absence of corners, points or other abrupt edges;
and

positioning means for enabling a surgeon to adjust a position of the spacing member when said spacing member resides between adjacent intervertebral bodies.

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89. (New) An intervertebral spacing implant comprising:

a spacing member adapted for implanting between adjacent vertebral bodies of a human spine as a load-bearing replacement for a spinal disc, said spacing member further comprising an external, concavo-convex contour with respect to one dimension of said spacing member;

wherein the spacing member is solid and is either inherently non-porous or is otherwise rendered non-porous;

wherein the spacing member defines an imaginary arcuate centerline residing between opposing sides of the external concavo-convex contour of said spacing member, said arcuate centerline forming less than half a circle such that said spacing member has a cashew shape having a uniform width along a majority length of the spacing member;

wherein the spacing member comprises an upper surface and a lower surface and a free insertion end, and wherein at least one of

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said upper surface and said lower surface comprises a male corner line, and wherein said spacing member includes a tapered portion between said male corner line and said free insertion end of said spacing member such that said spacing member becomes progressively thinner from said male corner line toward said free insertion end of said spacing member, wherein said tapered portion is characterized by at least one smooth surface that is a part of either said upper surface or said lower surface and extends from said male corner line to said free insertion end, said smooth surface having an absence of corners, points or other abrupt edges; and

a rod member for enabling a surgeon to adjust a position of the spacing member when said spacing member resides between adjacent intervertebral bodies.

90. (New) An intervertebral spacing implant comprising:

a spacing member adapted for implanting between adjacent vertebral bodies of a human spine as a load-bearing replacement for a spinal disc, said spacing member further comprising an external, concavo-convex contour with respect to one dimension of said spacing member;

wherein the spacing member is solid and is either inherently non-porous or is otherwise rendered non-porous, and is constructed from a rigid, non-resilient load-bearing material;

32 wherein the spacing member defines an imaginary arcuate centerline residing between opposing sides of the external concavo-convex contour of said spacing member, said arcuate centerline forming less than half a circle such that said spacing member has a cashew shape having a uniform width along a majority length of the spacing member;

wherein the spacing member comprises an upper surface and a lower surface and a free insertion end, and wherein at least one of said upper surface and said lower surface comprises a male corner line, and wherein said spacing member includes a tapered portion between said male corner line and said free insertion end of said spacing member such that said spacing member becomes progressively thinner from said male corner line toward said free insertion end of said spacing member; and

positioning means for enabling a surgeon to adjust a position of the spacing member when said spacing member resides between adjacent intervertebral bodies.

91. (New) An intervertebral spacing implant comprising:

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a spacing member adapted for implanting between adjacent vertebral bodies of a human spine as a load-bearing replacement for a spinal disc, said spacing member further comprising an external, concavo-convex contour with respect to one dimension of said spacing member;

wherein the spacing member is solid and is either inherently non-porous or is otherwise rendered non-porous, and is constructed from a rigid, non-resilient load-bearing material;

wherein the spacing member defines an imaginary arcuate centerline residing between opposing sides of the external concavo-convex contour of said spacing member, said arcuate centerline forming less than half a circle such that said spacing member has a cashew shape having a uniform width along a majority length of the spacing member;

wherein the spacing member comprises an upper surface and a lower surface and a free insertion end, and wherein at least one of said upper surface and said lower surface comprises a male corner line, and wherein said spacing member includes a tapered portion between said male corner line and said free insertion end of said spacing member such that said spacing member becomes progressively thinner from said male corner line toward said free insertion end of said spacing member; and

32 a rod member for enabling a surgeon to adjust a position of the spacing member when said spacing member resides between adjacent intervertebral bodies.
